



ASBEX

HOMEOWNER GUIDES

ASBESTOS VERMICULITE LEAD PAINT



Was the home built before 1985?

Are you buying, selling or renovating the home?

Have you made an inventory of suspected asbestos materials?

Have suspected materials been tested by an experienced home inspector or asbestos consultant?

If you have asbestos containing materials that need to be removed, call in the experts.

ASBESTOS

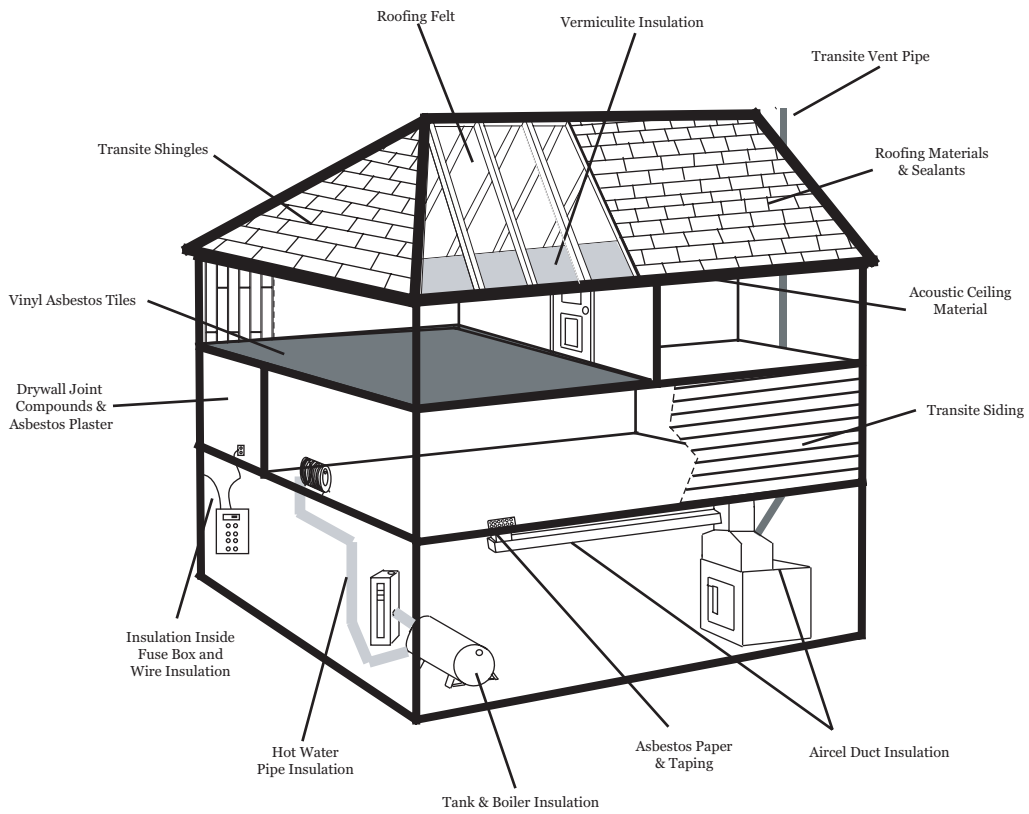
Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral fiber that was widely used in construction due to its strength, resistance to chemicals, non-combustibility and thermal properties. Once considered a "magic mineral", asbestos is now known to be a dangerous carcinogen and its use is banned in most industrialized nations.

Asbestos containing materials become dangerous when they are disturbed or when they disintegrate. As the crystalline structure of the asbestos containing material breaks down, millions of microscopic fibers become airborne and are inhaled. Over time, exposure to the asbestos fibers can cause a variety of serious conditions including asbestosis, mesothelioma and lung cancer.

Generally, only homes built before 1985 are likely to contain asbestos materials. Due to the minute nature of the fibers, asbestos can only be identified under the microscope. Experienced experts such as home inspectors and environmental consultants can identify suspect materials, take samples and submit them to a laboratory.

If you have asbestos in you home, it should only be removed by an experienced environmental abatement company. For more information contact Asbex.

ASBEX OTTAWA 613-228-1080



POSSIBLE ASBESTOS LOCATIONS IN YOUR HOME

Legal Notice: This guide is only meant to introduce homeowner's to the hazards and possible locations of asbestos. This guide is in no way comprehensive. Homeowner's should enlist the assistance of professionals trained in the identification and removal of asbestos containing materials.

VERMICULITE

The Issues

Some vermiculite insulation may contain asbestos fibers. Asbestos containing vermiculite insulation may pose health risks if disturbed during maintenance, renovation, demolition or other activities in or around the home. If the insulation is isolated and not disturbed, it poses very little risk to your health.

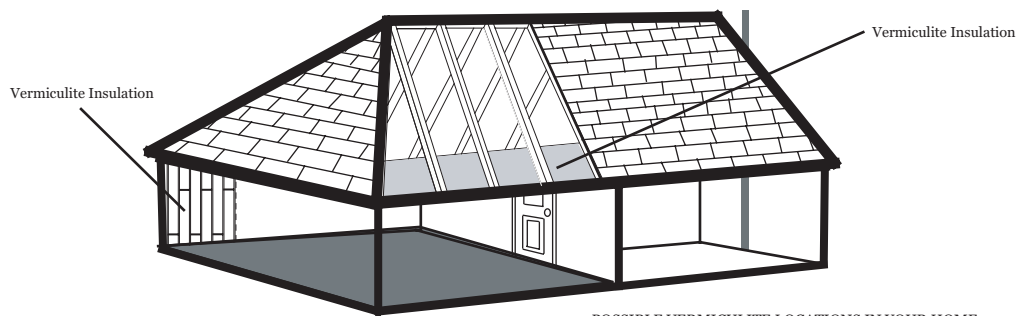
Background

Vermiculite is a mica-like mineral mined around the world and used for a variety of commercial and consumer products. Vermiculite is a unique product because it is fire-resistant and has good insulation properties. Vermiculite ore extracted by the Libby Mine in Montana between 1920 and 1990 may be contaminated with Asbestos. The asbestos contaminated vermiculite sold in Canada was sold under a variety of brand names including "Zonolite". Most vermiculite products produced between 1920-1990 originated from the Libby Mine, therefore to be safe, assume that if your building has vermiculite, the vermiculite contains asbestos.

Health Risks

Asbestos is generally only dangerous when it becomes airborne. The overall percentages of asbestos in vermiculite are relatively low. This low percentage of asbestos fibers can be a poor indicator of potential health risk related to asbestos containing vermiculite due to the loose nature of the vermiculite. Because the asbestos fibers are not enclosed within the product (as with many other asbestos containing materials), the fibers can easily be made airborne when disturbed. Disturbed vermiculite contaminated with asbestos could create dangerously high concentrations of asbestos fibers in the air. When asbestos fibers are inhaled they can cause a variety of illnesses including asbestosis, mesothelioma and lung cancer.

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POSSIBLE VERMICULITE LOCATIONS IN YOUR HOME

Identification

Asbestos can only be detected by means of laboratory testing. Vermiculite samples must be taken from the bottom of the joist to ensure accurate results. Only trained inspectors or consultants should take samples to ensure that the sampling does not disturb the vermiculite and make the asbestos airborne. The lab results will identify if your vermiculite is contaminated with asbestos.

Future Liability & Your Home

If the vermiculite contains asbestos it will one day have to be removed by technicians trained and equipped to safely remove asbestos. All maintenance or renovation activities which have the potential of disturbing the vermiculite must be postponed until after the vermiculite is removed. During the course of a real estate transaction, buyers will often demand that the cost of the removal be accounted for in the purchase price or that the removal be completed before the ownership transfer.

Minimizing Your Risk

The best way to minimize your risk with asbestos contaminated vermiculite is to avoid disturbing it in any way. If the contaminated vermiculite is properly contained and the proper precautions are taken, it poses very little risk to occupants of the building. If the vermiculite needs to be removed, contact trained professionals.

DO NOT DISTURB VERMICULITE INSULATION UNTIL IT IS TESTED

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LEAD PAINT

Why Should I Check For Lead Paint?

Seventy-four percent (74%) of all private homes built before 1980 contain lead paint. You don't have to eat lead paint to get lead poisoning. The risk of lead paint poisoning increases dramatically if lead paint is removed improperly.

How Lead Affects You Child's Health

The long term effects of lead on a child can be severe. They include learning disabilities, decreased growth, hyperactivity, impaired hearing, and even brain damage. If caught early, these effects can be limited by reducing exposure to lead or by medical treatment. If you are pregnant avoid exposing yourself to lead. Lead can pass through your body to your baby.

Where Does the Lead Come From?

- Many house paints manufactured before the 1970's contained lead, and some of that paint may remain in older homes.
- Paint on window frames, walls, the outside of the house and other surfaces. Tiny pieces of peeling or chipping lead paint are dangerous if eaten. Lead paint in good condition is not usually a problem except in places where painted surfaces rub against each other and create dust.
- Many varnishes on wood floors contain high concentration of lead. Always have floors tested before sanding.
- Although lead has been largely removed from gasoline, the soil in yards and playgrounds near major streets and roads often contain higher levels of lead; the legacy of many years of leaded gas emissions.
- Lead plumbing pipe or lead solder on pipe can release lead into drinking water.

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Why Is Lead Such A Big Deal?

Lead poisoning can cause serious illness, especially in children. If a child breathes in lead dust or eats soil containing lead, eats chips of old paint that contain lead, or drinks water tainted with lead from old pipes or solder, that child is at risk.

Dust: The Real Villain

Extremely small amounts of lead paint in the form of dust (left after a renovation project) or tiny pieces of lead paint slowly flaking from the walls and woodwork, are all it takes to contaminate an entire home. You and your family could be absorbing dangerous levels of lead by transferring this invisible dust from your hands to your mouth. Parents should have their children's blood tested periodically for elevated lead levels. If the lead level is normal, there's no cause for alarm. A slightly elevated level means that parents should find the source of the lead that is getting into the child's bloodstream.

How Do I Have My Home Tested?

There are several testing methods, from small home test-kits to having the paint sample analyzed in a laboratory. You may also need to have your water supply tested for lead, and to make sure there are no dishes with lead-based glazes, or foreign-made toys that may be coated with lead-based paints, in your home.

Don't Remove Lead Paint Yourself

Families have been poisoned by scraping or sanding lead paint; these activities generate large amounts of lead dust. Lead dust from repairs or renovations of older buildings can remain in the building long after the work is completed. Heating lead paint may release lead into the air. Lead removal is not a do-it-yourself project.

DON'T REMOVE LEAD PAINT YOURSELF!

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